

**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



Decision Notice

**For Proposed Noxious Weed & Exotic Vegetation Management Plan
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Region One**

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
490 North Meridian Road
Kalispell, MT 59901**

May, 1995

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to implement their **Noxious Weed and Exotic Vegetation Management Plan** which outlines an integrated approach to weed management on all of their owned or leased lands in Region One (Northwestern Montana). FWP received 29 separate sets of written comments (28 favorable and 1 unfavorable to the proposed Alternative 2) pertaining to the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the Weed Management Plan. The content of these comments are summarized below:

1. Please use alternatives to chemical spraying. Chemicals choke every system there is; as they spread into our soil, air; everywhere they choke all life. Also, many plants considered "weeds" have much medicinal properties valuable to us.
2. Excellent, the time is now to fix this problem before it's too late. An aggressive effort should be taken to keep these noxious weeds at bay. Wild Horse Island would be a good area to begin with.
3. In this document you folks have detailed an integrated approach to noxious weed management. Since weed management is such a complex problem, it then must be solved by a complex of tools. Your integrated approach (Alternative 2) is perfect for the situation. Therefore I am very much in support of your efforts.
4. The Flathead County Weed District has received a 2-year \$10,000 grant from the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund. These funds have been targeted to address weed education needs in the Flathead with an emphasis on **prevention**. I commend you on limiting the use of vehicles. Does this include gate closures? Will applicator be responsible for posting? How will FWP dispose of hand-pulled plants? Contractors **must** keep detailed records. Flathead County has added Oxeye Daisy and Scentless Chamomile to County Noxious Weed List. Sheriff's phone number has

been changed to 758-5585. Hi Dep is **not** an Ester. Supplement label for Transline not included. Appendix A (EA) efficacy rating can be completed by contacting Peter Rice at U of M, or Roger Sheley at MSU.

5. Based on my experience with some of the FWP Wildlife Management Areas, it appears your list of "weed species present" is not complete. Approximately 38% of the fishing access sites list "unknown" for weed species present. You should **require** the use of weed seed free hay, mulch, etc. There is less chance for spills to occur if herbicides are mixed on-site. "Cease spraying when rainfall is expected within 24 hours" should not be a guideline as it is extremely difficult to predict rainfall. Effectiveness of the herbicide program will be greatly hampered by placing unreasonable restrictions on application. "Avoid picloram applications in sequential years" may limit the effectiveness of your control efforts. Picloram rate on page 35 should be 1 pint/ac for knapweed and 1 quart/ac for St. Johnswort. Consider moving orange hawkweed to Category 1 on page B-7; and butter and eggs to at least Category 2 on page B-8.

Based on these comments, the following changes were made to the draft EA:

1. Page 7 (p.6 EA), Table 1 - added sulphur cinquefoil to Kootenai Falls, Mount Silcox, and Ninepipe WMA's. Also added dalmatian toadflax, field bindweed, St. Johnswort, purple loosestrife, common toadflax, hound's tongue, musk thistle, and oxeye daisy to Ninepipe WMA.
2. Page B-6 - Added Flathead County to County Declared Noxious Weed listing for Oxeye Daisy and Scentless Chamomile.
3. Page E-2 - Changed Flathead County Sheriff's phone number to 758-5585.
4. Page G-1 - Changed Hi-Dep from Ester to Amine.

At this time, FWP Region One would like to make the following clarifications and explanations regarding implementation of their Weed Management Plan:

1. Chemicals will not necessarily be the primary method driving our weed management efforts. FWP recognizes that chemical herbicides will probably be used as a tool for short term control providing all Environmental Review Criteria are met (pages 57 and 58, EA). FWP will work with county weed districts and other organizations to accomplish long term noxious weed control through re-establishing healthy perennial vegetation and natural predators (bio-controls).
2. FWP is required by law to control those state and county declared weed species which occur only on those lands which they own or control (lease). FWP is not responsible for controlling weed infestations along lakes, rivers, streambanks, riparian

corridors or on islands which are in private ownership.

3. FWP will continue to complete and upgrade site-specific weed inventories, plans, and environmental assessments as survey and identification of property boundaries are done; and will also limit the spread of noxious weeds with gate closures, road and trail reconstruction, consolidation and/or revegetation as well as hand-pulling, bagging and burning where feasible. Contracted applicators will be responsible for posting and washing surfaces and equipment.

With these revisions, the draft EA has been adopted as the final EA. This decision notice will act as a supplement which changes the draft to the final EA. FWP Region One has evaluated the EA and applicable laws, regulations and policies and has determined that this action will not have a significant effect on the human and natural environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. FWP Region One's decision is to implement an integrated Noxious Weed Management Program as proposed in Alternative 2 of the EA. The Environmental Assessment may be viewed or obtained from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Kalispell, Montana. Please direct requests and questions to the undersigned.

Sincerely,



Dan Vincent
Regional Supervisor
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